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C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 001533

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: MAJORITY PARTIES HOLD CONGRESS TO SELECT
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

REF: DJIBOUTI 1377

Classified By: Pol/Econ Erinn C. Reed for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (U) Summary: Two parties within the ruling coalition held congresses to select their presidential candidate and formulate plans for the elections scheduled for April 2005. The Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) held an ordinary session of the National Council on 24 November. In meetings presided over by party president Ali Mohamed Daoud, the party members unanimously chose Ismail Omar Guelleh as their candidate. The Popular Social Democratic Party (PPDS) held its congress 25 November and also nominated Guelleh as their candidate for the presidential race. The four ruling coalition parties which comprise the Union for Popular Majority (UMP) have now all endorsed or nominated Guelleh as their candidate, making Guelleh the official UMP candidate. End Summary.

2. (U) The FRUD congress held 24 November unanimously selected President Ismail Omar Guelleh as the party's candidate for the presidential election scheduled for April 2005. The president of FRUD, Ali Mohamed Daoud, stated that the last ten years of partnership with the ruling party, Popular Rally for Progress (RPP), have been overall very satisfying. However, Daoud did comment that despite the numerous promises fulfilled from the last presidential campaign, there were still points agreed upon in the peace accords from 1995 that have not been accomplished. Daoud specifically mentioned poverty, youth unemployment, social justice, and rural development as areas with unmet needs. (Note: FRUD was once the political faction of the rebellious movement of the same name that began the civil war in the early 1990's. The armed faction of FRUD is now known as the opposition party Alliance of Republican Democracy (ARD), the party of late Ahmed Dini Ahmed. End Note.)

3. (U) The PPSD congress held 25 November also selected Guelleh as candidate and focused on the party's path for the future. The congress was led by party leader, Moumin Bahdon Farah, who emphasized the need for party members to enhance democracy within the party through participation in the functioning of the party by making monetary contributions to increase its budget. The PPSD celebrated its second anniversary as an official political party this year. Farah also asked party members to show commitment to party ideals like social welfare, the fight against poverty, and assistance to more vulnerable portions of the population. The PPSD approved Guelleh's economic and social program for the coming election and expressed their belief that the Doraleh project will contribute to a better life for all Djiboutians.

4. (C) Comment: The Journal Officiel published September 15th announced the promotion of 14 military officers. However, according to sources within the Djiboutian military headquarters these 14 persons were not previously enlisted in the army. The source suspects that the promotions were given to members of the private militia of Aden Robleh Awaleh, president of the National Democratic Party (PND). Reportedly, when PND joined the ruling coalition UMP, Guelleh and Awaleh struck a deal to integrate and promote members of Awaleh's militia after attending the Hol Hol military academy. The decree granting the 14 promotions was not issued from the headquarters of the Djiboutian Armed Forces (FAD) and sources suspect that the decree came from the Military Cabinet of the Presidency.

5. (C) Comment continued: Rumors are floating around town that the president and vice-president of PPSD have been given new SUV's by the government. Speculation on the reason for this gift points to the government sweetening the deal to keep the party in the coalition. This theory has some merit as both the president and vice-president of PPSD were said to be very upset by Guelleh's statements at the RPP congress in October (see reftel). End Comment.

RAGSDALE